

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a determined effort to help out-of-work Americans, later today, the U.S. House of Representatives is expected to again take up legislation containing a provision, long supported by Congresswoman Gwen Moore, which will temporarily extend unemployment benefits for workers whose current unemployment compensation has expired.

“Our economy is in recession and with each passing day millions of Americans who are looking for work are losing their unemployment benefits,” said Rep. Moore. “The Bush Administration and its allies in Congress have made clear what their priorities are and it is unfortunate that their priorities do not include helping hardworking Americans get back on their feet.”

Late last week House Republicans tried twice to block the passage of a measure that would have immediately provided unemployment benefits for up to 13 weeks or half the duration of regular unemployment compensation to those workers whose unemployment insurance was set to expire. In opposing the bill the Republican leadership, adopting the Bush Administration’s rationale, argued that the unemployment rate did not warrant an extension. Ironically, in 2002 when unemployment levels were actually lower than what they are now, President Bush and members of the GOP in Congress advocated for the same type of extension they now oppose.

“The opposition to the unemployment insurance extension by the Bush Administration and its allies truly shows what they really think of hardworking Americans,” said Moore. “When so many people are suffering because of the Bush Administration’s disastrous economic policies, it cannot come as a surprise that 84% of Americans think our country is headed in the wrong direction.”

In January, Congresswoman Moore began efforts to help unemployed workers make ends meet in the face of rapidly rising gas and food costs by advocating for the extension of unemployment insurance. However, even as the economy has weakened, Rep. Moore and her colleagues in Congress continue to face resistance from the Bush Administration and its GOP allies opposed to alleviating the burden many Americans face.

Currently there are 8 millions Americans who are unemployed. The provision that House Republicans and President Bush have previously tried to block would benefit over 3.8 million Americans who are currently unemployed but actively looking for work.

“I remain committed to helping unemployed workers during these very difficult times,” said Rep. Moore. “I understand what it means to look for work and worry about how you are going to take care of your family in the meantime. It would be unfortunate for the Bush Administration to veto a bill which could literally be the lifeline for thousands of families across the country.”

In the face of numerous veto threats and after weeks of tough negotiations, Democratic Congressional leaders finally compelled the Bush Administration to allow the unemployment provision to be passed into law as part of the Iraq supplemental bill on the House floor today.

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